Res Rhetorica

ISSN: 2392-3113

Mediated Rhetoric of Recent Conflicts

12 (2) 2025

ISSUE EDITORS: KATARZYNA MOLEK-KOZAKOWSKA, ECATERINA ILIS

NADIA GERGAŁO-DĄBEK
MARIA CURIE-SKŁODOWSKA UNIVERSITY, POLAND
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4065-4511
nadia.gergalo-dabek@mail.umcs.pl

Language as a front of conflict: Russian discourse on the Ukrainian language in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war

Język jako front konfliktu: rosyjski dyskurs wobec języka ukraińskiego w kontekście wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej

Abstract

The article examines how the Ukrainian language has become a strategic battlefield in Russian propaganda, acting as a front in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It reports on the analysis conducted within the Discourse-Historical Approach of media statements made by Russian politicians and propagandists. It shows how current attacks on the Ukrainian language are a continuation of historical practices of linguistic repression. It reveals that the rhetoric of delegitimization of Ukrainian is based on recurring *topoi*, such as artificiality, primitiveness, and hostility, and on well-established mental models that legitimize Russia's takeover. The results confirm that Ukrainian is not seen as a neutral communication tool but as a hostile element in the narrative of the uniformity of the "Russian World." Russian depreciations and delegitimizations aim to deny the existence of a distinct Ukrainian national identity as a neo-imperialist strategy to subjugate Ukraine.

Artykuł analizuje, w jaki sposób język ukraiński staje się strategicznym polem bitwy w rosyjskim dyskursie propagandowym, działając jako front w konflikcie rosyjsko-ukraińskim. Wykorzystując podejście dyskursywno-historyczne, przeprowadzono analizę wypowiedzi medialnych rosyjskich polityków i propagandystów, aby pokazać, w jaki sposób współczesne ataki na język ukraiński są kontynuacją historycznych praktyk represji językowych. Badanie pokazuje, że retoryka delegitymizacji języka ukraińskiego opiera się na powtarzających się toposach, takich jak sztuczność, prymitywność i wrogość, oraz na ugruntowanych modelach mentalnych, które legitymizują neoimperialną politykę Rosji. Wyniki analizy potwierdzają, że język ukraiński nie jest traktowany jako neutralne narzędzie komunikacji, ale jako wrogi element w narracji o jednolitości „rosyjskiego świata". Rosyjska deprecjacja i delegitymizacja ukraińskiego ma na celu zaprzeczenie istnieniu odrębnej ukraińskiej tożsamości narodowej i jest elementem strategii podporządkowania Ukrainy.

Key words

neo-imperialism, delegitimization, Russian-Ukrainian war, Ukrainian national identity, Russian propaganda
neoimperializm, delegitymizacja, wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska, ukraińska tożsamość narodowa, rosyjska propaganda

License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 international (CC BY 4.0).
The content of the license is available at http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Received: 30 November 2024 | Accepted: 16 May 2025
DOI: https://doi.org/10.29107/rr2025.2.7

Res Rhetorica, ISSN 2392-3113, 12 (2) 2025, p. 133

NADIA GERGAŁO-DĄBEK
MARIA CURIE-SKŁODOWSKA UNIVERSITY, POLAND
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4065-4511
nadia.gergalo-dabek@mail.umcs.pl

Language as a front of conflict: Russian discourse on the Ukrainian language in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war

1. Introduction

Geopolitical and ideological conflicts are increasingly played out at the level of narrative and rhetoric, facilitated by the rapid development of communication technologies. Through mass media, such conflicts are gaining wide coverage, influencing knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, and social identities and which is determined by the language used (Fairclough 1995). The rhetoric of war, often based on the skillful creation of distinctions between "us" and "them," is a means of social mobilization, as well as a weapon that individual states, organizations or groups use to implant elements of their ideology into the collective consciousness of opposing societies to undermine their cohesion (van Dijk 2001).

The Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, which has taken a hybrid form since the annexation of Crimea in early 2014 and has evolved into a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, is an example of using rhetoric in the service of its political interests. An additional battleground in this war is the Ukrainian language – the cultural carrier of Ukrainian national identity that undermines the ideological foundations of Russian neo-imperialism (Maxwell 2023). The relevance of research on the rhetorical delegitimization of the Ukrainian language in Russian neo-imperialist discourse is particularly acute in the context of Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine. In the current political and military confrontation, language is not only a communication tool but, most importantly, a pillar of Ukrainian national identity, subjectivity and sovereignty.

Russian neo-imperialist discourse plays a role in shaping perceptions of Ukraine both in and outside Russia through the influence of elites (i.e., people who, by their position, hold power or exert control over institutions and society), as well as through a range of social and discursive practices (Bourdieu 1991; van Dijk 2008). It is the elites who decide on the canons and hierarchies of values,

influencing moral norms, patterns of behavior, and shaping the worldview of citizens. Statements by politicians play a key role in the process of shaping public opinion and constructing dominant political narratives, which is why they are a central focus for rhetorical analyses.

2. Discourses of nationality and ideologies of imperialism

Discourse is an ambiguous concept, variously defined and widely interpreted depending on the disciplinary lens through which it is analyzed. The works of intellectuals, philosophers, and scholars from diverse fields have contributed to the popularization of the notion of discourse and its study (Foucault 1977; van Dijk 1993; 2001; Howarth 2005; Bourdieu 1991; Fairclough 1995; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak 2001; 2002; 2008). Interest in discourse derives from the interest in language and its role in social life. From a linguistic perspective, discourse is understood as language in use and is analyzed through the lens of linguistic properties. In the social sciences, discourse is studied because it can shape reality and influence society. Discourse is a social practice of meaning-making and a method of giving significance to a particular area of social life (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). As a distinct way of perceiving the world, expressed through language, discourse has causal power: it directs and conditions the perception of certain topics, influences the consciousness of individuals and social groups, models it, and plays both a political and commanding role. The approach to discourse analysis that is distinguished by actively engaging with the topics and phenomena under study and moving beyond descriptivism toward political and moral challenge, is known in the literature as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (van Dijk 1993, 249–283; 2001, 9–44; Fairclough 1993, 138–168). CDA is a form of inquiry that "focuses primarily on how abuses of social power, domination and inequality are realized, perpetuated and challenged through text and speech in social and political contexts" (van Dijk 2008, 352).

Ideologies that reflect power relations are continually reproduced in discourse, and ideological discourses play a crucial role in mobilizing the population to action. Among those ideologies are those that were accounted for theoretically, notably by Eric Hobsbawm (2010) through the theory of national identity and by Benedict Anderson (1997) through the concept of "imagined communities." Theories of nationalism (Gellner 1991; Brubaker 1998) further contribute to understanding the processes of national identity formation and how the sense of cultural and linguistic belonging contribute to building a sense of national distinctiveness. Among the unique nation-building factors, such as history, territory, awareness of origin, national character, blood ties, religion, culture and art, as well as national

symbols, language holds a special place. From the perspective of the cultural definition of a nation, it is language that serves as the key carrier of that identity, strengthening community and fostering belonging to the nation (Kamusella 2001).

Understanding the depreciation of the Ukrainian language as a tool for the continuation of Russia's anti-Ukrainian actions, which is characteristic of a post-colonial state (Riabczuk 2013), can be enhanced through the lens of the theories of colonialism and decolonization. Throughout the centuries of colonization of most Ukrainian lands by Russia, the suppression and marginalization of the Ukrainian language served as one of the empire's main tools in its struggle against Ukrainian identity. In Western Europe, the nation was often equated with the state, and national belonging was equated with citizenship (Jajecznik 2008, 31). Deprived of its own state, the Ukrainian nation has, throughout history, been seen as a linguistic-cultural--ethnic community, in which language functioned as the most prominent identity marker. As José María Tortosa notes, "language, being a political instrument of nations, states or blocs, takes on a special significance in nation-building or in the struggle against invaders" (Tortosa 1986, 39). Similarly, "the battle for Ukrainian language," as traced across centuries of Ukraine's interaction with its neighbors, has become a focal point in the struggle of independent Ukraine itself, "locked in a hybrid war with Russia with no end in sight" (Flier and Graziosi 2017, 12; Subtelny1991).

The suppression of the Ukrainian language in the Russian Empire was guided by the ideology that no Ukrainian language (referred to as "Little Russian" at the time) "existed, does not exist, and cannot exist," and that there is only a dialect of the Russian language. For the first time, such a formulation appeared in the Valuyev circular of July 18, 1863 (Tsirkulyar ministra... 2000, 240–241). This document, issued by the Minister of the Interior, Count Peter Valuyev, de facto criminalized the Ukrainian language and significantly restricted its public use. Based on this circular, it was forbidden to print books, teach children, or perform in theaters in Ukrainian (Tairova-Yakovleva 2013). This was justified by the belief that "nothing unites people politically as much as the unity of language and literature, and conversely, nothing separates them as much as the separateness of language and writing" (Tymoshyk 2007, 243).

The Russian government's numerous repressive actions against the Ukrainian language (Rudnytskyi 2007; Radevych-Vynnytskyi 2011; Sushko and Levytskyi 2012; Svarychevska 2023) are part of a broader mechanism of cultural imperialism, that is, the practice of imposing the culture, language, and discourse of one dominant nation on subjugated territories. The concept of cultural imperialism was introduced by Frantz Fanon (1985) and developed by Edward Said (1993) and is widely used in postcolonial studies and describes how a hegemonic narrative

legitimizes political and cultural domination. Said defines imperialism as "the practice, theory and attitude of a dominant metropolis that rules over a distant territory" (1993, 8), and interprets the discourse of empire as a kind of system of narrative means that reflects the existing situation of imperial domination, legitimizing it and considering it "objectively" inevitable and necessary (Said 1993, 60–61).

It should be noted that the concept of cultural imperialism is variously defined (White, 2001). In the field of international relations, Herbert Schiller (1969) applied the term *cultural imperialism* when analyzing the growing influence of the United States. In international relations and communication, cultural imperialism is defined as "a verifiable process of social influence by which nations impose their system of beliefs, values, knowledge, norms of behavior, and entire lifestyles on other countries" (Beltran 1978, 184). Russia's attempts to impose its culture, language and ideology, including its repression of Ukrainian language and identity, are part of the mechanism of hegemonic domination described by Said and Fanon, in which language and culture serve as key tools for legitimizing political control.

Linguistic imperialism is a component of cultural imperialism and is manifested in the domination of one language over another/others, as explained by Robert Phillipson (1992), who applied it mainly to the analysis of the exploitation of the ideological, cultural and elite power of the English language for economic and political gain by dominant English-speaking cultures in the era of globalization (Phillipson 2003). At the same time, the phenomenon of linguistic imperialism applies to the position of the Russian language in Ukraine, as well as Belarus and, to a greater or lesser extent, other former Soviet republics (Getka and Darczewska 2022, 62–143). During the period of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, there was a consistent effort to marginalize the Ukrainian language by limiting the sphere of its use and simultaneously promoting Russian as the prestigious and dominant language. Such actions aimed at weakening Ukrainian national identity and establishing Russia's cultural hegemony in the region. Such actions are not to be seen as a matter of administrative policy, but also a strategy embedded in a broader discourse of domination. An analysis of Russian linguistic imperialism, therefore, requires a consideration of both the specific political decisions and their narrative justifications that legitimize the process of subjugating Ukraine.

3. The notion of mental models

According to Teun van Dijk, discourse analysis should not be limited to the "autonomous study of text and conversation," and it should also take into account the context, understood "not as objective social situations or their relevant properties," but rather as "mental models" thereof (van Dijk 2008, 238).

The theory of mental models derives from cognitive psychology (Johnson-Laird 1980). A mental model represents a reality created by the mind based on perception, imagination, knowledge, and discourse comprehension (Johnson-Laird 2006, 28). Mental models play a crucial role in understanding, interpreting, and constructing meaning; they contain the "cognitive" aspects of a given situation, such as the goals and knowledge of discourse participants. Specifically, mental models:

- help recipients situate messages within a specific cultural, historical, or social context;
- influence how a text is received and understood, leading to different conclusions depending on the recipient's prior experiences and beliefs;
- reinforce particular narratives, especially in political, propaganda, or media discourses;
- shape the perception of reality: depending on which mental models are activated, the same message may be interpreted differently.

The framework of Russia's narrative about Ukraine – its people, language, culture, and statehood – is shaped by Russian historical myths (Keenan 1994; Drużnikow 1998), which serve as the foundation for mental models. One of the most widespread mental models is the civilizational model, according to which Russia presents itself as the sole legitimate heir to the traditions of Kyivan Rus and the Orthodox civilization known as the *Russkiy Mir* (Putin 2012). This model is inseparable from Ukraine and necessitates its complete subjugation to Russia. Russia considers the baptism of Rus, with Kyiv as its capital, to be the origin of its civilization and statehood.

Closely related to this is the model of historical invariability, which asserts that Ukraine has never been and can never be an independent state and that any attempts at its distinctiveness are temporary and externally imposed. This, in turn, underpins the imperial nostalgia model, according to which Russia has the right to reclaim lost territories, with Ukraine being part of its natural sphere of influence. Ukraine is, therefore, "the key and the prerequisite for the existence of Russian imperialism" (Besançon 2004, 7), which is why its takeover and retention within its sphere of influence have been placed at the core of the Russian agenda (Dugin 2015, 18). According to the paternalistic model, Russia is depicted as the "elder brother" who must guide Ukraine, as the latter is allegedly incapable of independence. Another model within Russian discourse is the national unity model, which posits that Ukrainians and Russians constitute a single nation, whose division is driven by "external forces trading in Russophobia" (Putin 2012, 2021; Radzik 2016).

Since at least the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, Ukraine has occupied a central position in Russian media discourse, reflecting the intensification of

Russia's efforts to achieve not only military but also ideological subjugation of Ukraine. Ukraine's attempts to break free from Russia's orbit and assert its independence naturally disrupt the deeply ingrained mental models within Russian discourse. In response to this "rupture," Russia deploys disinformation aimed at weakening or outright denying Ukrainian identity and political sovereignty. As a result, Ukraine has become one of the primary targets of Russian disinformation, a fact confirmed by the EUvsDisinfo database – the flagship project of the East StratCom Task Force under the European External Action Service. Utilizing data analysis and media monitoring in fifteen languages, the EUvsDisinfo platform has been identifying and exposing instances of Kremlin-backed disinformation disseminated within the EU and Eastern Partnership countries since 2015. As of the time of writing, the database contains 18,464 cases of Russian disinformation, 9,985 of which concern Ukraine, accounting for 54 percent of all recorded cases (EUvsDisinfo Database; hereinafter referred to as Disinfo Database). Within the database, 387 cases specifically relate to language issues, including the origins of the Ukrainian language, the status of Russian-speaking citizens, and language legislation. The examples of disinformation about Ukraine recorded in the database represent the Russian propaganda discourse and will be used as empirical material in the present study.

3. Methodology

The study explores media statements by Russian politicians and influential figures and in mediated propaganda against the Ukrainian language. The sources include television speeches, public statements, official announcements, and media content that appeared after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and were registered in the Disinfo platform. The dataset provides a basis for analyzing communication strategies and examining narratives, or the politicized ways of constructing reality and shaping public opinion. Such data also make it possible to identify rhetorical mechanisms used in Russian propaganda.

The data are analyzed with content and qualitative analysis enriched with discourse analysis techniques characteristic of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (Wodak 2001) to trace the processes of discursive delegitimization of the Ukrainian language, focusing on "how a given phenomenon is problematized and the description of the practices within which this problematization manifests itself" (Howarth 2005, 207). DHA is an interdisciplinary approach, and both theoretical concepts and research methods are eclectic in nature and are used to contribute to the explanation of the object of research (Wodak 2008, 194). In DHA, *topoi* stand for ideological instruments for the replication and perpetuation of specific thinking

patterns or mental models (Reisigl and Wodak 2001). Thus, they serve to construct arguments and categorize reality in ways that support dominant narratives.

Topoi, also known as *loci communes* (commonplaces), are often treated as "universal schemes of argumentation and persuasion, established frameworks for addressing specific topics and issues" (Głowiński et al. 1988, 261). The concept originates from ancient traditions and Aristotle's works (Babiński 2001, 25–27) as a typical starting point for argumentation or a line of reasoning in rhetoric. According to Wengeler, *topoi* regulate argumentative reasoning, are integral to collective knowledge, and construct factual contexts created by the speaker (2003, 262). Since using *topoi* shapes discourse at the thematic level, they are employed in discourse analysis as semantic units that help uncover the fundamentals of argumentation (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Mirocha 2022).

In 1998, Ruth Wodak, with other researchers, developed a list of discursive strategies and linguistic devices used to construct national identity, based on Austrian materials. Among these strategies, *topoi* were identified as key elements, often employed to introduce widely accepted statements that aid in persuading audiences to adopt a particular point of view (Wodak et al. 1998). In political discourse, *topoi* such as "threat" and "savior" are used to protect national interests and achieve political objectives (Kondakova 2022). As mental frameworks or sets of commonly accepted beliefs within a given social, political, or ideological context, they form the foundation of legitimization, lending it an appearance of logical consistency and objectivity. As a result, *topoi* serve to rhetorically legitimize nationalistic values (e.g., nation, patriotism, community) and may be applied to statements on national culture or language. In Russian discourse towards Ukrainian, *topoi* serve the opposite function: they do not perpetuate values, but undermine, weaken and delegitimize Ukrainian identity, which makes this case particularly interesting.

Based on the method adopted here, the following research questions are formulated to identify the delegitimization mechanisms used in Russian propaganda against the Ukrainian language: (1) How does contemporary Russian propaganda uses historical strategies of delegitimizing the Ukrainian language? (2) What role do *topoi* play in entrenching certain mental models? By analyzing the uses and distribution of these *topoi*, the study reveals how the discursive dimension of Russia's propaganda discourse fits into a broader neocolonial project.

4. Results of the analysis

As explained above, in the Russian discourse concerning Ukraine, its language, culture, history, and statehood, *topoi* serve as an important ideological tool for

maintaining historical myths and legitimizing military actions. *Topoi* help construct logical justifications for Russian narratives, making arguments more convincing and consistent with mental models. Thus, taking into account the historical continuity of Russian imperial myths, the study identifies the specific *topoi* that shape the perception of the Ukrainian language as artificial, primitive, or hostile.

4.1 *Topos* of artificiality

The Ukrainian language is portrayed as artificially created by the West (most often by Austria-Hungary and Poland) or by Soviet authorities (Disinfo Database, 7 X 2018; 4 III 2019; 19 VII 2019; 7 XI 2019, 6 I 2021; 16 VII 2020; etc.), rather than as the result of a natural historical process. This is not a new motif in Russian discourse, as the existence of the Ukrainian language was officially denied as early as the 1863 Valuyev Circular, which claimed that Ukrainian had never existed in the past and would not exist in the future. In Tsarist Russia, the Ukrainian language and nation were viewed as a "Polish intrigue" (Miller 2000, 174, 177; Getka and Darczewska 2022, 157–158). The same motif was propagated during the Ukrainian People's Republic (1917–1921), which fought for its survival and the recognition of the Ukrainian nation's right to self-determination (Shul'gin 2015, 183).

This *topos* is repeatedly used in statements by Russian politicians, political commentators, and propagandists, appearing in various discourses and is used as a rhetorical tool. In February 2014, during Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity, State Duma deputy Vladimir Zhirinovsky claimed that the Ukrainian language was invented in Vienna based on the Polish language (Zhirinovskiy… 2014). Such statements aim to delegitimize Ukrainian cultural identity, shaping the perception of the language as an artificial construct imposed by external forces. The myth of the alleged "Polish origin" of Ukrainian emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century when Tsarist Russian authorities became alarmed by the Polish uprising of 1830–1831 (Selezniov 2016, 13; Tairova-Yakovleva 2013, 60). The claims that Ukrainian is "artificial" and arose under the influence of Polish loanwords have been debunked by Selezniov (2016), who provides solid evidence, including academic studies, archival sources, and comparative analyses with other languages.

Russian politician and propagandist Pyotr Tolstoy has repeatedly voiced opinions on the supposed artificiality of Ukrainian. In the television program *Voskresenye*, he described "Ukrainian borders and language as artificial" (Disinfo Database, 7 X 2018). In another instance, Tolstoy stated that about ten authors designed the Ukrainian language based on southern Russian dialects at the end of the nineteenth century. His statements are classified as examples of disinformation, indicating the prevalence of this narrative in Russian discourse (Disinfo Database, 23 III 2017).

Vladimir Putin has also repeatedly commented on the Ukrainian language, portraying it as a "corrupted" form of Russian and questioning its value as a separate, fully-fledged language. The President of Russia claims that although Ukrainian culture and language have their peculiarities, they are part of the great Russian culture (*Bolshaya preskonferentsiya…* 2017). Putin's statement is part of a broader narrative – the Russian myth of the triune nation – in which historical and cultural differences between Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Russians are minimized in favor of ideological unity (Radzik 2016; Getka and Darczewska 2022).

The *topos* of the artificiality of the Ukrainian language appeared, among other instances, in a statement by Russian political scientist Alexei Martynov on one of Russia's most-watched television programs, *60 Minutes*, hosted by propagandists Olga Skabeeva and Yevgeny Popov. In the episode aired on September 5, 2019, Martynov called the Ukrainian language "artificial" and claimed that he was not aware of a single scientific work written in it. He also expressed the belief that it is unsuitable for education, engineering, or technology (*Sel'skiy i neprigodnyi…* 2019).

It should be noted that the *topos* of the artificiality of the Ukrainian language functions not only in media discourse but also in the educational sphere. In history materials about the "Ukrainian question" for schools, prepared by the Russian Military-Historical Society and presented by its director, Mikhail Myagkov, the Ukrainian language is described as "deliberately contaminated" with Polish and English loanwords to "hinder understanding" among Slavs. These materials are used in lessons titled *Conversations on Important Topics*, which, by Putin's decree, have been mandatory in Russian schools and kindergartens since 2022 (*Avtory…* 2025). The claim that the Ukrainian language was deliberately contaminated with borrowings from Polish and English is an example of the *topos* of artificiality. The devaluation in the statements cited above undermine the legitimacy of the language as an autonomous system, thereby diminishing the authenticity of Ukrainian cultural identity. Myagkov's remarks further suggest an alleged deliberate effort to disrupt communication between Ukrainians and Russians. Labeling and devaluing the Ukrainian language are discursive techniques frequently used by Russian politicians and activists to question its authenticity. Terms such as "artificial" or "corrupted" not only deny the historical richness and natural development of the language but also reinforce the narrative of its inferiority compared to Russian.

The devaluation of the Ukrainian language has become part of a broader political strategy aimed at weakening its position and thus consolidating Russian narrative dominance. According to Russian opposition activist Leonid Gozman (2017), the recognition of Ukrainians as one people with Russians and of the Ukrainian language as a slightly distorted version of Russian provides the Kremlin with

moral justification for its actions against Ukraine. The *topos* of the artificiality of the Ukrainian language is further reinforced through disinformation. One such example is the false claim that the first president of Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk's proposal to recognize Ukrainian as one of the official languages of the United Nations was denied because of its alleged artificiality (VoxUkraine 2022). In reality, no such event occurred, as established by the VoxCheck team investigating disinformation cases.

It should be noted that the *topos* of the artificiality of the Ukrainian language often appears alongside the *topoi* of the artificiality of the Ukrainian nation and state (Disinfo Database, 7 X 2018; 4 III 2019; 19 VII 2019; 7 XI 2019; 6 I 2021; 16 VII 2020). For example, Anatoly Vasserman, a well-known political consultant in Russia and a deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, claims that the Ukrainian language does not exist and that the Ukrainian nation was "invented" by nationalists (Malayev 2022). Similarly, in 2008, during the NATO summit in Bucharest, the Russian president declared that Ukraine is an artificial entity and that most of its lands historically belong to Russia (Putin 2008).

This theme is consistently repeated in Russian discourse, including just days before the full-scale invasion. On February 21, 2022, Putin stated that Vladimir Lenin created Ukraine and that the modern Ukrainian state "can rightfully be called Lenin's Ukraine" (Putin 2022). In the aforementioned educational materials on the history of the "Ukrainian question," Ukraine is also described as a "purely Soviet creation" (*Avtory…* 2025). This claim aims to sever contemporary Ukraine from its historical roots, delegitimizing the idea of an independent Ukrainian tradition that spans centuries. Presenting Ukraine as a product of political manipulation from the Soviet era reinforces a mental model in which Ukrainian statehood and language are seen as inauthentic and externally imposed. Sources indicate that many of these claims are identified as disinformation by the Disinfo project, underscoring the propagandistic nature of these *topoi* in Russian discourse.

4.2 *Topos* of the primitive nature of the Ukrainian language

Another recurring theme in Russian discourse is the belief in the imperfection and deficiency of the Ukrainian language as "immature." Ukrainian is contrasted with Russian as its regressive, provincial, and inferior form or merely as a dialect (Disinfo Database, 19 VII 2019; Gulevich 2021). The editor of *Voennoye Obozreniye* (Military Review), Alexander Samsonov, in his 2022 article "The Ukrainian Language – a Dialect of the Russian Language," claimed that "the Ukrainian language (speech) is not a national language that has developed over centuries or even millennia, but rather a mixed dialect that emerged based on Russian under

strong Polish influence" (Samsonov 2022). His article perpetuates the *topos* of the primitiveness of the Ukrainian language, portraying it as an offshoot of Russian.

The previously mentioned State Duma deputy Anatoly Vasserman, in numerous statements (2009; 2020), argues that Ukrainian is not a distinct language but merely a dialect that evolved from the southern dialects of old Rus. According to Vasserman, despite more than 150 years of efforts by Ukrainian linguists, the differences between Ukrainian and Russian are mostly limited to minor lexical changes, while the syntax remains virtually unchanged. Vasserman emphasizes that a dialect, by nature, has a limited scope, in contrast to a fully established literary language. This narrative explicitly employs the *topos* of primitiveness, depicting Ukrainian as an underdeveloped or incomplete form compared to a fully-fledged literary Russian language. Vasserman's argumentation reduces Ukrainian to a collection of incidental lexical modifications of dialects, suggesting that its changes are superficial and do not affect its structure (syntax), which implies a lack of deeper, natural linguistic evolution. Such reasoning reinforces the rhetorical message of the "primitiveness" of the Ukrainian language, undermining its autonomy and historical continuity. This *topos* serves political purposes of delegitimizing Ukrainian national identity and justifying Russia's imperial claims.

The Russian TV propagandist Alexei Martynov also claimed that Ukrainian is spoken only in villages and that "there is no known academic work in the Ukrainian language" (*Sel'skiy i neprigodnyi…* 2019). The *topos* of primitiveness aims to undermine the Ukrainian language's capacity as a tool for producing scientific content and to convince the audience that Ukrainian has no value in fields crucial to social and technological progress. Such flawed reasoning is often used to manipulate public opinion, particularly in political and propaganda contexts (Walton 1999, 373). The analyzed statement aligns with the narrative promoting Russian culture and language superiority over Ukrainian. By employing persuasive generalization and *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, Martynov suggests that Ukrainian should be abandoned because it is allegedly incapable of competing with Russian. This rhetorical construction reinforces the Russian imperial narrative in which Russia is portrayed as the center of development and progress, while Ukraine is reduced to a peripheral and dependent "inventory."

Recently, researchers have concluded that "constructing a positive self-image in Russian discourse […] is primarily achieved by degrading the status of Ukrainian culture, portraying it as later and secondary to Russian culture, with numerous developmental pathologies, and by discrediting its aesthetic values" and assigning it "the characteristics of a low, rural culture" (Getka and Darczewska 2022, 144). The belief that Ukrainian is merely a vernacular or a subordinate language took root during the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. It continues to support the

myth-based mental model that denies the existence of a distinct Ukrainian nation and promotes the notion of the historical unity of Ukrainians and Russians.

4.3 *Topos* of hostility

The *topos* of hostility toward the Ukrainian language also dates back to the times of the Russian Empire, when the language was banned and considered a threat to the Russian state. The spread of the Ukrainian language and literature, mainly in printed form, was seen by the tsarist authorities as "an interference with the unity and integrity of Russia" (Tymoshyk 2007, 242). The *topos* of hostility to the Ukrainian language is part of a broader phenomenon, namely the perception of the independent existence of Ukraine and its separate (from Russian) nation as a manifestation of Russophobia (Disinfo Database, 31 X 2016; 5 XII 2016; 21 I 2017; 28 IV 2017; 10 VII 2019; 8 IX 2021). In current Russian discourse, the Ukrainian language is also presented as hostile, as it, as a carrier of distinct Ukrainian identity, is an obstacle to the consolidation of the "Russian world," which Russia, through its authorities and elites, includes Ukraine within. Russian journalist Vladislav Gulevich believes that the Ukrainian language has been consciously "militarized," which gives it "an ideological charge that it originally did not have, turning it into a symbol of war against the Russian world" (Gulevich 2021).

Attacks on the Ukrainian language are justified by its alleged hostility and "Russophobia" inherent in the language itself. This is evident in the statement of the well-known and influential Russian director, Nikita Mikhalkov. At a plenary session of the pedagogical forum in the Moscow region on August 25, 2022, he said:

> I heard that in Donbas they will teach in the Ukrainian language [...] The thing is that over these years, the Ukrainian language has become a symbol of Russophobia. The expressions we hear in Ukrainian transcription and pronunciation are, for us, for the world, in principle, and for them themselves, an expression of hatred against Russia. Therefore, I would be afraid if subjects were taught in Ukrainian. It's a disaster (Mikhalkov, 2022).

Attributing a Russophobic motivation to the Ukrainian language in Mikhalkov's statement also clearly denies Ukraine's right to its own national identity. If language, as the foundation of that identity, is equated with hostility toward Russia, then according to this logic, Ukraine's cultural distinctiveness is also treated as a form of opposition to Russia. In this way, the Ukrainian language is stripped of legitimacy as a symbol of sovereign national identity and reduced solely to the function of an anti-Russian political tool. The statement also includes a clear exaggeration intended to convince the audience that the essence of the Ukrainian language – its sound, vocabulary, and structure – is deliberately aimed against Russia. This

generalization leaves no room for cultural distinctiveness, while simultaneously suggesting that the presence of the Ukrainian language is unnatural and hostile.

Mikhalkov's statement carries a strong emotional charge through the term *Russophobia*, which evokes a sense of threat among Russian audiences. Placing the Ukrainian language in this context aims to instill fear and build an image of Ukraine as an unfriendly entity that rejects Russia and Russianness in every aspect, thereby justifying actions aimed at controlling the Ukrainian cultural space. Every bearer of the Ukrainian language is treated as a threat. Mikhalkov presents the Ukrainian language not as a neutral cultural element but as a tool of a "hostile ideology," where the phrase "it itself is a manifestation" objectifies the Ukrainian language, stripping it of agency and reducing its usage solely to one purpose – expressing hostility towards Russia. This simplification removes from the Russian audience the obligation to understand the language as an autonomous cultural value, instead imposing the perception of it as a threat.

Mikhalkov's words can be seen as an expression of fear of the strengthening Ukrainian national identity based on language, culture, and history. Education in the Ukrainian language in regions such as Donbas challenges Russia's claims to these areas and supports the integration of these regions into the rest of Ukraine. Mikhalkov presents Russia as a victim of hatred supposedly imposed by the Ukrainian language. Such rhetoric reflects a mental model of the necessity to "defend" Russian-speaking citizens and legitimizes aggression toward Ukraine as a preventive measure. Mikhalkov's statement reinforces the traditional "us versus them" division – where "us" refers to Russia and the Russian language and "them" to Ukraine, with its language treated as an act of aggression against Russianness. The exclusionary rhetoric in this statement, based on such dichotomous, Manichean divisions, as Wodak observes, dates back to ancient writers: "discourse and political communication always require distinguishing between the 'us–them' type, which allows both the building of a positive image of the speakers/writers and a negative characterization of the opponents as 'foreign'" (Wodak 2008, 186).

The mutually exclusive elements in Russian discourse – on the one hand, the belief that Ukrainians and Russians are "one people," and on the other, the clear dichotomy of "us versus them" – indicate an internal contradiction with deep significance in the context of Russia's neo-imperial goals. They can be seen as a deliberately constructed dissonance, serving both to legitimize Russia's claims over Ukraine and justify attempts to eliminate Ukrainian national identity, with the Ukrainian language becoming a key obstacle. In situations where Ukraine expresses its cultural distinctiveness – including through language – Russian rhetoric, using the *topos* of hostility, frames Ukrainians as a threat. Russian media and politicians clearly present "us" (Russians, the Russian community, Russian World)

in opposition to "them" (Ukrainians, "Nazis" who reject unity with Russia). This type of dichotomy has a mobilizing effect on Russian hostility toward Ukraine, portrays Ukrainian national and independence aspirations as anti-Russian actions, and thus justifies the invasion of Ukraine. In contrast, Russian-speaking Ukraine is treated as "ours," belonging to the Russian civilization.

The influence of *topoi* on the mental models that justify Russian behavior towards Ukrainians is extremely important, as these mental schemes inform recurring narrative patterns that shape the way Russians perceive and treat Ukrainians. Attacks on the Ukrainian language are not limited to texts and statements; they also include physical and verbal assaults on speakers of the Ukrainian language, especially Ukrainian refugees, in various countries. An example of such aggression is an incident that occurred in Switzerland, where a Russian man attacked a Ukrainian woman when she refused to speak to him in Russian (*Vidmovylasia hovoryty.…* 2023). These actions, aimed at intimidating and humiliating those who speak Ukrainian, are part of a broader phenomenon of persecuting Ukrainians abroad, which often goes beyond mere words and poses a threat to their physical and psychological safety. This issue requires a separate study, as it goes beyond the scope of this article.

Topoi in Russian propaganda discourse serve key functions that support the strategy of delegitimizing the Ukrainian language and weakening Ukrainian national identity. While the *topos* of artificiality serves to legitimize Russia's imperial claims over Ukraine by presenting the Ukrainian language as an unnatural political construct rather than a fully-fledged national language, the *topos* of primitiveness functions to marginalize and deprecate the Ukrainian language, presenting it as a system with limited intellectual and practical capabilities, incapable of academic, technical, or administrative functions. Meanwhile, the *topos* of hostility (Russophobia) plays a key role in social mobilization, presenting the Ukrainian language as a tool of political aggression against Russia and Russian-speaking populations. Promoting Ukrainian is portrayed as an act of discrimination against Russians and a pretext for political or military intervention. Furthermore, the Ukrainian language is incorporated into the narrative of the West's ideological weapon against Russia, strengthening anti-Western sentiments and creating an image of Ukraine as a "nationalist" state allegedly conducting repressive policies towards Russian-speaking citizens. Each of these *topoi* serves a specific function – the *topos* of artificiality undermines the legitimacy of the Ukrainian language, the *topos* of primitiveness devalues its practical worth, and the *topos* of hostility mobilizes Russian society, justifying aggressive policies towards Ukraine.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of Russian propaganda discourse regarding the Ukrainian language, several key conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the study found that current attacks on the Ukrainian language are deeply rooted in historical practices of linguistic repression, employed since the Russian Empire and continued during the Soviet era. Historical analysis and observations of current media statements confirm that the rhetoric of delegitimizing the Ukrainian language represents a consistent continuation of imperial strategies aimed at denying the existence of a separate Ukrainian national identity and the right to self-determination. It is worth noting that many specific claims that serve to perpetuate the *topoi* of artificiality, primitiveness, and hostility of the Ukrainian language have been identified and publicly labeled as disinformation by the EUvsDisinfo project.

Secondly, an important aspect is the use of specific *topoi* to shape and reinforce propaganda narratives. In particular, the *topos* of artificiality serves the purpose of delegitimizing the Ukrainian language, by presenting it as an unnatural political construct rather than a legitimate linguistic system. The *topos* of primitiveness marginalizes the Ukrainian language, presenting it as a form of communication with limited intellectual and functional value, which supports the establishment of a linguistic hierarchy where Russian is perceived as the language of "higher civilization." The *topos* of hostility (Russophobia) serves to mobilize society by depicting the Ukrainian language as a tool of ideological struggle against Russia and its citizens. This set of *topoi* systematically depreciates and marginalizes the Ukrainian language, while reinforcing mental models in which Ukrainians are seen as incapable of independent existence, with Russia, as the "older brother," having the right to decide the fate of Ukraine and Ukrainians, confirming the hypothesis regarding the role of *topoi*.

Finally, the analysis confirms that the Ukrainian language in Russian propaganda is not treated as a neutral communication tool but as an adversarial element in the geopolitical conflict. As a key component of national identity, the Ukrainian language represents a significant barrier to Russian neo-imperialism. It plays a crucial role in shaping national consciousness. It has become one of the main arenas of struggle for Ukraine's sovereignty and independence in the face of Russia's hegemonic ambitions.

Russian propaganda uses mental models based on Russian historical myths of the "one nation," which deny Ukraine its own identity, historical continuity, and subjectivity. Marginalization, depreciation, and the limitation of the use of the Ukrainian language are part of a strategy of linguistic imperialism aimed at cultural and political domination, weakening Ukrainian identity, and reintegrating Ukraine into the "Russian World." The presented propaganda mechanisms demonstrate

how language can be used to legitimize aggressive political actions and shape the perception of reality in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian identity conflict. In this light, the study shows that control over language is not merely a cultural issue but a key element of geopolitical and ideological strategies.

References

Anderson, Benedict. 1997. *Wspólnoty wyobrażone. Rozważania o źródłach i rozpowszechnianiu się nacjonalizmu*. Kraków: Znak.

"Avtory shkol'noy metodichki iz RVIO ukrainskiy yazyk nazyvayut «iskusstvennym», a Ukrainu – sozdaniyem [The authors of the school manual from the Russian Military Historical Society call the Ukrainian language "artificial" and Ukraine a creation of the USSR]." 2025. *Novaya gazeta*. https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2025/02/20/avtory-shkolnoi-metodichki-iz-rvio-ukrainskii-iazyk-nazyvaiut-iskusstvennym-a-ukrainu-sozdaniem-sssr-news.

Babiński, Marian. 2001. „Wokół toposu. Stanowisko Arystotelesa w niektórych kwestiach logicznych." *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 3: 15–28.

Beltran, Luis Ramiro. 1978. "Communication and cultural domination: USA - Latin American case." *Media Asia* 5(4): 183–192.

Besançon, Alain. 2004. *Przedmowa do wydania francuskiego*. In: *Dwie Ukrainy* by Mykola Riabczuk. Wrocław: Kolegium Europy Wschodniej.

Bol'shaya press-konferentsiya Vladimira Putina [Vladimir Putin's big press conference]. 2017. Prezident Rossii. http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56378.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brubaker, Rogers. 1998. *Nacjonalizm inaczej. Struktura narodowa i kwestie narodowe w nowej Europie*, trans. Jan Łuczyński. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Drużnikow, Jurij. 1998. *Rosyjskie mity. Od Puszkina do Pawlika Morozowa*, trans. Franciszek Ociepka, and Maria Putrament. Warszawa: Volumen.

Dugin, Alexandr. 2015. *Ukraina: moya voyna. Geopoliticheskiy dnevnik* [Ukraine: my war. Geopolitical diary]. Moskva: Tsentrpoligraf.

EUvsDisinfo Database, https://euvsdisinfo.eu/disinformation-cases/

Fairclough, Norman, and **Wodak, Ruth.** 1997. "Critical Discourse Analysis." In: *Discourse as Social Interaction*, ed. Teun van Dijk. 258–284. London: Sage.

Fairclough, Norman. 1993. "Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities." *Discourse & Society* 4:138–168.

Fairclough, Norman. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.

Fanon, Frantz. 1985. *Wyklęty lud ziemi*, trans. Hanna Tygielska. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.

Flier, Michael S., and **Graziosi, Andrea.** 2017. *Introduction*. In: *The Battle for Ukrainian: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Michael S. Flier, and Andrea Graziosi. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Archeologia wiedzy*, trans. Andrzej Siemek. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.

Gellner, Ernest. 1991. *Narody i nacjonalizm*. Warszawa.

Getka, Joanna, and **Darczewska, Joanna.** 2022. *Ruś porwana? Rosyjska wojna o tożsamość Ukrainy*. Warszawa.

Głowiński, Michał, Kostkiewiczowa, Teresa, Okopień-Sławińska, Aleksandra, and **Sławiński, Janusz** (eds.). 1988. *Słownik terminów literackich*. 2nd edn. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Gozman, Leonid. 2017. "Putin sdelal dva neozhidannykh shaga – Gozman. [Putin made two unexpected steps – Gozman]." *Obozrevatel*. https://www.obozrevatel.com/crime/leonid-gozman-vyu.htm.

Gulevich, Vladislav. 2021. "Ukrainskiy yazyk i Russkiy mir." *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*. https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/28664

Hobsbawm, Eric. 2010. *Narody i nacjonalizm po 1780 roku. Program, mit, rzeczywistość*, trans. Jakub Maciejczyk, and Marcin Starnawski. Warszawa: Difin.

Howarth, David. 2005. *Dyskurs*, trans. Anna Gąsior-Niemiec. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa.

Jajecznik, Konrad. 2008. „Narody w Europie – między bytem a ideą." *Społeczeństwo i Polityka* 3 (16): 23–40.

Johnson-Laird, Philip N. 1980. "Mental Models in Cognitive Science." *Cognitive Science* 4: 71–115.

Johnson-Laird, Philip N. 2006. "Mental Models, Sentential Reasoning, and Illusory Inferences." In: *Mental Models and the Mind*, ed. Carsten Held, Markus Knauff, and Gottfried M-GV Vosgerau, 27–52. New York: Elsevier.

Kamusella, Tomasz. 2001. "Language As an Instrument of Nationalism in Central Europe." *Nations and Nationalism* 7 (2): 235–251.

Keenan, Edward. 1994. "On Certain Mythical Beliefs and Russian Behaviours." In: *The legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Frederick Starr, vol. 1, 19–40. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Kondakova, Maria. 2022. "Topos of Threat and Topos of Saviour as Basic Argumentation Strategies in Modern Diplomatic Discourse." *Journal of Psycholinguistic*. https://doi.org/10.30982/2077-5911-2022-53-3-161-171.

Malayev, Stas. 2022. "Vasserman zayavil, chto ukrainskiy narod «sochinili» natsionalisty [Wasserman said that the Ukrainian nation was 'composed' by nationalists]." *Gazeta.ru*. https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2022/01/25/17192923.shtml?updated

Maxwell, Olga. 2023. "In Russia's War against Ukraine, One of the Battlegrounds is Language Itself." *The Conversation*. https://theconversation.com/in-russias-war-against-ukraine-one-of-the-battlegrounds-is-language-itself-201170.

Mikhalkov vystupil protiv prepodavaniya v shkolakh Donbassa na ukrainskom yazyke [Mikhalkov spoke out against teaching in Ukrainian in Donbass schools]. 2022. TASS. https://tass.ru/obschestvo/15561313.

Miller, Alexei. 2000. *Ukrainskiy vopros v politike vlastey i russkom obshchestvennom mnenii (vtoraya polovina XIX veka)* [The Ukrainian question in the Russian Empire]. Sankt-Peterburg: Aleteyya.

Mirocha, Piotr. 2022. „Topika i argumentacja w inferencyjnych modelach komunikacji i dyskursu". *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* R. 31(123): 25–40.

Phillipson, Robert. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Phillipson, Robert. 2003. *English-only Europe? Challenging Language Policy.* London: Routledge.

Putin, Vladimir. 2008. *Vystupleniye Vladimira Putina na sammite NATO* (Bucharest, 4 April 2008). UNIAN. https://www.unian.net/politics/110868-vyistuplenie-vladimira-putina-na-sammite-nato-buharest-4-aprelya-2008-goda.html

Putin, Vladimir. 2012. "Rossiya: natsional'nyy vopros [Russia's national question]." *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html.

Putin, Vladimir. 2021. "Ob istoricheskom edinstve russkikh i ukraintsev [On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians]." http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181

Putin, Vladimir. 2022. "Putin nazval Lenina arkhitektorom Ukrainy [Putin called Lenin the architect of Ukraine]." *Interfax.ru*, https://www.interfax.ru/russia/823520

Radevych-Vynnytskyi, Yaroslav. 2011. *Linhvotsyd yak forma henotsydu* [Linguocide as a form of genocide]. Kyiv.

Radzik, Ryszard. 2016. „Rosyjska wizja narodu ogólnoruskiego." *Studia Białorutenistyczne* 10: 55–76.

Reisigl, Martin, and Ruth Wodak. 2001. *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetoric of Racism and Antisemitism*. London–New York: Routledge.

Riabczuk, Mykola. 2013. "Colonialism in Another Way: On the Applicability of Postcolonial Methodology for the Study of Postcommunist Europe." *Porównania* 13: 47–59.

Rudnyckyj, Jaroslav B. 2007. "The Ems Ukase of 1876 and the Problem of Linguicide." *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*. 4 (2): 153–155.

Said, Edward. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Samsonov, Alexander. 2022. "Ukrainskiy yazyk – narechiye russkogo yazyka [The Ukrainian language is a dialect of the Russian language]." *Voyennoye obozreniye*. https://topwar.ru/193115-ukrainskij-jazyk-narechie-russkogo-jazyka.html

Schiller, Herbert. 1969. *Mass Communications and American Empire*. New York: Kelley Publishers.

Selezniov, Volodymyr. 2016. *Movni viiny. Mif pro "zipsovanist" ukrainskoi movy* [Language wars. The myth of the "spoilt" Ukrainian language]. Kharkiv: Vivat.

"Sel'skiy i neprigodnyy! Propagandist Putina publichno oskorbil ukrainskiy yazyk na rosTV ["Rural and unsuitable!" Putin's propagandist publicly insulted the Ukrainian language on Russian TV]." 2019. *Obozrevatel*. https://news.obozrevatel.com/abroad/na-rostv-publichno-oskorbili-ukrainskij-yazyik.htm.

Shul'gin, Vasiliy. 2015. *Rossiya, Ukraina, Evropa. Izbrannyye raboty* [Russia, Ukraine, Europe. Selected works] Moskva: Posev.

Subtelnyi, Orest. 1991. *Ukraina: istoriia* [Ukraine: history], trans. Yu Shevchuk. Kyiv: Lybid.

Sushko, Roman, Levytskyi, Myroslav. 2012. *Khronika nyshchennia ukrainskoi movy: vid doby Romanovykh do sohodennia* [Chronicle of the destruction of the Ukrainian language: from the Romanov era to the present day]. Kyiv.

Svarychevska, Anzhela. P. 2023. „Linhvotsid, abo zh linhvistychnyi henotsyd ukraïns'koï movy [Linguicide, or Linguistic Genocide of the Ukrainian Language]." *Nova filologiya* (91): 100–105. https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2023-91-13.

Tairova-Yakovleva, Tatiana. 2013. "«Valuyevskiy tsirkulyar» i zapret ispol'zovaniya ukrainskogo yazyka" ["Valuyevsky circular" and the ban on the use of the Ukrainian language]. *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta* 2(4): 55–60.

Tortosa, Jose Maria. 1986. *Polityka językowa a języki mniejszości – od wieży Babel do Daru Języków*, trans. Agnieszka Rurarz. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.

Tsirkulyar ministra vnutrennikh del P. A. Valuyeva Kiyevskomu, Moskovskomu i Peterburgskomu tsenzurnym komitetam ot 18 iyulya 1863 g. [Circular of the Minister of Internal Affairs P. A. Valuyev to the Kiev, Moscow and St. Petersburg Censorship Committees dated 18 July 1863]. In Alexei Miller. 2000. *«Ukrainskiy vopros» v politike vlastey i russkom obshchestvennom mnenii (vtoraya polovina XIX v.)* [The Ukrainian question in the Russian Empire], 277–278. Sankt-Peterburg.

Tymoshyk, Mykola. 2007. *Istoriia vydavnychoi spravy* [History of Publishing]. Kyiv: Nasha kultura i nauka.

van Dijk, Teun A. 1993. "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse & Society* 4(2): 249–283.

van Dijk, Teun A. 2001. *Badania nad dyskursem*. In: *Dyskurs jako struktura i proces*, tłum. G. Grochowski, ed. Teun A. Van Dijk, 9–44. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

van Dijk, Teun A. 2008. *Discourse and Power*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vasserman, Anatoliy. 2009. „Ukrainskiy yazyk nesamostoyatelen. Aktual'nyye kommentarii" [Ukrainian language is not self-sufficient]. https://actualcomment.ru/ukrainskiy_yazyk_nesamostoyatelen.html

Vasserman, Anatoliy. 2020. "Anatoliy Vasserman. Kak sozdavali ukrainskiy yazyk 2015 g." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UOuPqP3Igs

"Vidmovylasia hovoryty movoiu okupantiv: rosiianyn napav na ukrainku u Shveitsarii – siuzhet [Refused to speak the language of the occupiers: a Russian man attacked a Ukrainian woman in Switzerland – story]." 2023. *5 Channel*. https://www.5.ua/svit/vidmovylasia-hovoryty-movoiu-okupantiv-rosiianyn-napav-na-ukrainku-u-shveitsarii-siuzhet-314751.html.

VoxUkraina. 2022. "FEIK: Pershyi prezydent Ukrainy Leonid Kravchuk proponuvav zareiestruvaty ukrainsku movu v OON yak ofitsiinu [FAKE NEWS: Ukraine's first president Leonid Kravchuk proposed to register Ukrainian as an official language at the UN]." *Vox Ukraine*. https://voxukraine.org/fejk-pershyj-prezydent-ukrayiny-leonid-kravchuk-proponuvav-zareyestruvaty-ukrayinsku-movu-v-oon-yak-ofitsijnu

Walton, Douglas. 1999. "The Appeal to Ignorance, or Argumentum Ad Ignorantiam." *Argumentation* 13: 367–377.

Wengeler, Martin. 2003. *Topos und Diskurs. Begründung einer argumentationsanalytischen Methode und ihre Anwendung auf den Migrationsdiskurs (1960–1985)*. Tübingen.

White, Livingston A. 2001. "Reconsidering Cultural Imperialism Theory." *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* 6: 1–17.

Wodak, Ruth, de Cillia, Rudolf, Reisigl, Martin, Liebhart, Karin, Hofstätter, Klaus, and **Kargl, Maria.** 1998. *Zur diskursiven Konstruktion nationaler Identität.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Wodak, Ruth. 2001. *The Discourse-Historical Approach*. In: *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak, and Michael Meyer, 63–94. London: Sage.

Wodak, Ruth. 2002. *Discourse and Politics: The Rhetoric of Exclusion*. In: *The Haider Phenomenon in Austria*, ed. Ruth Wodak, and Anton Pelinka, 33–60. London: Transaction Publishers.

Wodak, Ruth. 2008. *Dyskurs populistyczny: retoryka wykluczenia a gatunki języka pisanego.* In: *Krytyczna analiza dyskursu. Interdyscyplinarne podejście do komunikacji społecznej*, ed. Anna Duszak, and Norman Fairclough, 185–213. Kraków: Universitas.

"Zhirinovskiy schitayet, chto ukrainskiy yazyk pridumali v Vene na baze pol'skogo [Zhirinovskyy believes that the Ukrainian language was invented in Vienna on the basis of the Polish language]." 2014. *Korrespondent.net*. https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/3303115-zhyrynovskyi-schytaet-chto-ukraynskyi-yazyk-prydumaly-v-vene-na-baze-polskoho.